



# ROUNDTABLE

## NEWS AND VIEWS FOR AND FROM KNIGHTS

### Choosing a Catholic School Begins with Mission

by Denise Donohue and Dan Guernsey for National Catholic Register



With Catholic Schools Week upon us (Jan. 28-Feb. 3), families are invited to recommit to Catholic education and register their children for the upcoming school year. Others who are exploring Catholic schools may benefit from a new Parents Guide to understanding the nature and benefits of a faithful, excellent Catholic education.

The higher graduation rates and college acceptance rates of students in Catholic schools are well-documented – but as impressive as these statistics are, they are of secondary importance. The real value of Catholic schools is not what they prepare students to do (go to college, earn high paying wages) but what they prepare them to be – a leaven to society and saints!

Because of this higher and broader horizon, parents should look not only at test scores and college admission rates but also at the strength and wholeness of the school's Catholic culture and how explicitly it accomplishes its Catholic mission.

How is a parent to begin this daunting task? The Cardinal Newman Society has articulated the Church's expectations as Principles of Catholic Identity in Education, and it has issued a Parents Guide to help families gauge the particular strengths and weaknesses of a Catholic school in key areas: curriculum, community, leadership, faculty and student outcomes. These are some highlights:

#### Curriculum

The curriculum should advance the mission of Catholic education, with abundant evidence that the faith informs all academic disciplines.

Is there evidence that the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Scripture are frequently referenced? Are textbooks supplemented with resources to help ground them in the Catholic faith and reflect a Catholic worldview?

Are students exposed to the best of Western civilization and culture, and do they understand the harmony which exists between faith and reason, especially in the study of the sciences?

Do literature selections assist the genuine development of the human person by using examples of virtue and vice, which allow students the opportunity to

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### 2018 Teacher and Staff of the Year

by Bea Cabrera for Saipan Tribune

Right: 2018 Teacher of the Year, Zhenzhu "Pearl" Jin (fourth from right) is recognized by school officials (from left to right) Counselor Tobed Smith, Acting Business Manager Julia Villafuerte, IT Director JC Clark, Parent Council President Luis Camacho, Director of Institutional Development John Blanco, Principal Frances Taimanao, Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez, and President Galvin Deleon Guerrero.



Left: 2018 Staff of the Year, Priscilla T. Dela Cruz (fourth from right) is recognized by school officials (from left to right) Counselor Tobed Smith, Acting Business Manager Julia Villafuerte, IT Director JC Clark, Parent Council President Luis Camacho, Director of Institutional Development John Blanco, Principal Frances Taimanao, Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez, and President Galvin Deleon Guerrero.

Mount Carmel School named Kindergarten teacher Zhenzhu Jin this past Tuesday as its Teacher of the Year for 2018.

Jin, more affectionately known within the MCS community as "Teacher Pearl," was recognized with other MCS teachers and staff during the school's 2018 Faculty and Staff Appreciation Ceremony. Priscilla T. Dela Cruz was also honored as the school's 2018 Staff of the Year.

According to MCS school president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Jin won the coveted plum for many reasons.

"What makes me proud of Pearl is that she was an international student that studied at Northern Marianas College. When she came here (Saipan), she struggled with English and I know this because I taught at the college and I got to know her from there," he said.

"To see her thrive as a student at NMC, graduate with an education degree, plant her roots here, work hard as a teacher and now awarded as the Teacher of the Year is such a great story. Her life and work also represents what our school is all about—students coming from different backgrounds and helping them succeed and these are exactly what Pearl has done," he added.

To be an MCS Teacher of the Year, you have to know what you are doing in terms of technique, instructional strategies, good classroom management, and, above all, to show you care for your students, Deleon Guerrero said.

"Teachers go through classroom observations where we invite professionals in the community usually from NMC and [the Public School System] and they come in and conduct classroom observations. They have a scoring rubric. They follow it and whoever gets the highest score wins it," he said.

"We have a saying that we live by here at MCS. People don't care how much you know them until they know how much you care and Pearl has shown us just that. She is usually here at 6:30 in the morning, first to get here and usually the last person to leave. She signs up for a lot of additional trainings even though she has a degree and this shows she is determined to be a lifelong learner," he added.

Jin herself was ecstatic about the award. "I wasn't expecting this but I am very happy. I know there is still a lot of room for improvement to learn more and I am going to train harder to [improve] myself each and everyday," she said.

"I love children, especially the younger children. When I see their development and growth, that makes me very happy. This is the

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## Announcements

### Math Court Online Registration

Reminder to all parents/guardians of our Math Court participants. Please ensure you have completed the online registration at <https://permission.click/O7W3>. The deadline is Monday February 5th, and late registration will not be accepted. Questions? See JC Clark.

### Parent Council Meeting

The next Parent Council meeting will be on Thursday, February 8, at 5:30 pm in the faculty lounge. All parents are welcome to join us for this meeting.

### 2018 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest

The US Ninth Circuit Court invites all high school students to participate in its annual essay and video contest for students in the western United States and Pacific Islands. This year's theme is the 14th Amendment and what its equal protection clause means to students. For more information, visit <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

## In the Future

### Family Night

TONIGHT at 6:00 pm

### Night with the Knights

TOMORROW, 6:00 pm, PIC

### Catholic Schools Week Holiday

Monday, February 5 (no classes)

### Senior Cake-Pop Gram

Tuesday, February 6

### Parent Council Meeting

Thursday, February 8  
5:30 pm in the Faculty Lounge

### Sophomore Hot Lunch

Saturday, February 10

## Sports Calendar

### CCOPSSA Middle School Volleyball

Tuesday, February 6  
MCS 1 v MCS2 @MCS

Thursday, February 8

MCS1 v SDA @MCS  
MCS2 v ACS @MCS

## ESLR of the Week

*#6. Develop continually as an independent lifelong learner.*

# Catholic School Mission

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enter into the lives of others so as to learn examples of nobility and courage?

Does the social studies curriculum help students understand and commit to the common good, the needs of the poor, human rights and human dignity?

If human sexuality classes are taught, are they fully transparent, in line with Church teaching and respectful of parents as the primary educators?

### Community

In Catholic education, parents are partners with the school. They participate in school liturgies and academic and extra-curricular events.

The school climate reproduces the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life, which is not only nurturing but genuinely positive and supportive.

Is an evangelical spirit of freedom and charity evident within the school? Are students challenged to strive for excellence in both human and Christian formation? Are virtues such as magnanimity, honor and modesty taught and evident? Are there opportunities and requirements for service?

Catholic education is in full communion with the Catholic Church and helps grow the Church. Are there activities, clubs and events that invite a deeper understanding of the Catholic teachings and traditions? Does the school display a concern for the life and problems of the Church, both local and universal? Are Catholic students helped to become active members of their parish communities? Is prayer a norm, and are Masses and Reconciliation frequent and reverent?

### Leadership

Opportunities for students to encounter the living God in a Catholic school depend heavily on a faith-filled leader who sets the tone and brings the community together under a common vision and mission.

Do leaders accept and promote the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel? Do they actively participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school and provide an example to others who find in them nourishment for Christian living? Do they see their position as a vocation rather than a profession and attempt to fully integrate their faith life with their daily decision-making?

### Faculty

Because a school depends chiefly on teachers to achieve its purpose, parents should give careful attention to the

teachers and their effectiveness at imitating Christ, the true teacher, not only in their work but in the entirety of their lives and actions.

Are the faculty exemplary apostolic witnesses to the teachings of the Church? Are they present at school Masses and other religious activities, and are they active in their parishes and local communities? Are they alert for opportunities to integrate culture and academic content with faith to create a synthesis of faith and life for their students?

### Student Outcomes

Catholic education provides for the integral formation of students in body, mind and spirit. Students, once individually formed, can advance the Christian formation of the world and ultimately take their place in the eternal Kingdom.

With this dual outcome of securing both the common and individual good, parents can ask: In what ways are graduates using their formation to aid society as a whole, to assist in the building up of impoverished communities, helping the poor or in other ways facilitating the efforts of the universal Church?

### Guiding Models of Catholic Education

It may seem daunting for parents to assess these areas on their own when selecting a Catholic school. Fortunately, some schools have proactively taken up the challenge of answering such questions related to strong Catholic identity by seeking recognition from the National Catholic Honor Roll.

The Honor Roll schools complete an extensive battery of questions after spending many hours of reflection on how effectively they are fulfilling the Church's expectations for Catholic education. Parents may want to spend some time on these schools' websites to get a sense of what a strong Catholic school looks like and compare them to their local schools.

The Church grows when parents and schools find and support each other in the quest for excellence in Catholic education, which starts and ends with Christ and is sustained by truth and by love.

During this Catholic Schools Week, all are encouraged to renew their commitment to authentic Catholic education wherever it is found.

*Denise Donohue is the deputy director and Dan Guernsey is the director of the K-12 education programs at the Cardinal Newman Society.*

# 2018 Teacher and Staff of the Year

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biggest award I have ever received in my life and, as a new teacher with not much experience, I am so thankful to everyone who gave me this chance. Everyone is so helpful, showed love and touched my heart," she added.

Deleon Guerrero said the appreciation ceremony was the school's way of giving back to the dedicated people at MCS.

"Teachers give a lot. People who enter teaching as a profession don't do it for fame and recognition. They do it because they love what they do and the students that they serve," he said.

"It's very easy for teachers to burn out because they are so passionate and that is why it

is important for students, parents, and all of us to show them how much we appreciate what they do," he added.

This year, MCS is pushing 600 students as far as enrollment is concerned that they had to open up additional sections in the 6th and 8th grades and hire adjunct instructors.

"We do our best to accommodate enrolment growth and, at the same time, a high level of instructional quality. ... We have very strict rules in maintaining small class sizes so if a class is already full, we put the kids on the waiting list," Deleon Guerrero said.